MARITIME ARCHIVES & LIBRARY

INFORMATION SHEET 10

CHILD EMIGRATION

17th and 18th century emigration

Child emigration began in England in the early 17th century, when the London Common Council sent out 100 vagrant children to the first permanent English settlement in North America, Jamestown in Virginia in 1619. More vagrant and poor children were sent out following the Privy Council's authorisation of child migration in 1620 with, for example, a 100 vagrant children being sent out amongst the reinforcements following the Indian Massacre of the settlers in Virginia in 1622.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, men, women and children were sentenced to transportation to the American and other colonies as punishment for crime. The labour shortage in the colonies also encouraged the act of spiriting (ie kidnapping) children for work in the Americas, resulting in large numbers of children, especially from Scotland, being forcibly emigrated. This continued until its exposure in 1757, following a civil action against Aberdeen businessmen and magistrates for their involvement in the trade.

The American War of Independence in 1783 meant an end to transportation to the American Colonies, and with the creation of the penal colony in New South Wales, Australia became the focus for child emigration, together with Canada and New Zealand.

19th and 20th century child emigration

Child emigration was undertaken by religious and charitable organisations (for further details see below). One of the earliest of these being the Children's Friend Society established in 1830 (see 1 below), which sent out its first party of child migrants to Australia in 1832. In 1844 the Ragged School Movement began, and sent out 150 children to New South Wales in 1849. In 1850 Parliament legalised Poor Law Guardians to fund emigration of children to the colonies.

Between 1870 and 1914 some 80,000 child emigrants, often known as 'British Home Children', were sent out to Canada alone, many as part of the Farm School Movement (see 12 below). After the interruption of the First World War child migration recommenced and following the Empire Settlement Act of 1923, the British Government supplied financial assistance to care societies to assist with migration, especially to farm school establishments. Australia became the main destination instead of Canada due to the effects of the Great Depression in the 1930s. Child migration schemes continued until the outbreak of the Second World War.

During the Second World War, possibly some 17,000 children were temporary emigrants to the British Dominions and USA, under official and unofficial schemes of evacuation to avoid the air raids and threat of invasion in Britain. The schemes were halted after a U-boat sank the *City of Benares*, which sailed from Liverpool on 13 September 1940 with

90 evacuee children under the government-sponsored scheme to Canada, 83 of the children died.
After the end of the war there were no ships available to take children to Australia until 1947, but there were now fewer British children sent as migrants, and the majority of these were sent out by the Catholic Church to Western Australia. Youth migration became more popular than child migration. In 1956 British Catholic care institutions ceased sending children out to Australia, following a critical report of a Home Office Fact-Finding Committee's inspection of the Australian institutions. The last nine child migrants to Australia were sent out by air by Barnardo's in 1967.

Child emigration societies and organisations

The Maritime Archives & Library does not hold any archives of child emigration societies, except for the National Children's Home (see 5 below). Contact addresses, where known, are at the end of this information sheet.

1 The Children's Friend Society

The Children's Friend Society was founded in London in 1830, as the Society for the Suppression of Juvenile Vagrancy, through the reformation and emigration of children. In 1832 the first party of children were sent to the Cape of Good Hope and Swan River Colony in Australia. In August 1833 their first party of children was despatched to Toronto, Canada with a total of 230 children being sent to Ontario and New Brunswick.

2 Annie MacPherson

The Children's Aid Society founded in 1853 in New York sent out orphans from New York by 'orphan train' to the farming states of the mid-west at Kansas, Ohio, Michigan and Iowa. This idea of sending out children to schools to be trained for farm work was adopted in London in 1870 by Annie MacPherson, the Scottish Evangelist. She escorted her first party of 100 children to her centre at Belleville, Ontario in 1870 and sent further children to her receiving homes of Marchmont and Galt, in Ontario, and Knowlton in Quebec. Annie MacPherson also arranged emigration parties for children from Dr. Barnardo's, the Quarrier Homes in Scotland and the Smyly Homes of Dublin as well as her own Home of Industry in East London.

3 Liverpool Sheltering Homes

In the late 1860s Alexander Balfour and Stephen Williamson, partners in the Liverpool shipowning firm of Balfour, Williamson & Co, became concerned at the numbers of destitute and orphaned children in Liverpool. Balfour along with another Liverpool shipowner, John Houghton, heard Annie MacPherson lecturing in London on her work with child emigration. Her sister, Louisa Birt, who assisted in her work, came to Liverpool to lecture about their work at a public meeting, which was held in November 1872. It was agreed that a society should be established in Liverpool to further this work, with the fundraising and management of the home to be kept separate from the London organisation. John Houghton offered the free use of premises adjoining the old Byrom Hall Baptist Chapel in Byrom Street, which was formally opened on 1 May 1873. The purpose of the Liverpool Sheltering Homes was to rescue destitute children, train them in the home, and accompanying them to

Canada. From Marchmont House in Ontario they were placed with families although they were supervised and visited until they reached the age of eighteen.

In 1889 the Liverpool Sheltering Homes moved into a new Home in Myrtle Street. Following the death of Louisa Birt in 1915, the family involvement was continued by her daughter Miss Lilian Birt. During Louisa Birt's lifetime an estimated 6,000 children were sent to Canada. The Home closed during the First World War but reopened in 1919. Six years later it was amalgamated with Dr. Barnardo's, who closed their own Home in Liverpool and transferred to Myrtle Street.

The Home was used as a training centre for boys before they migrated to Canada. In the late 1920s, as migration to Canada ceased, it was used as a home for schoolboys until it closed in 1935. Some records are held at Liverpool University http://www.liv.ac.uk/library/sca/colldescs/lsh.html.

4 Maria Rye's Female Middle-Class Emigration Society

Maria Rye (1829-1903) founded the Female Middle-Class Emigration Society in 1861, and was responsible for escorting parties of young women to Australia, Canada and New Zealand. From 1869 she also assisted young girls from workhouses, aged between 5-12 years. In September 1869 she sent her first party of 76 children, including many from Liverpool workhouse schools, to Canada on the SS *Hibernian* from Liverpool. In the annual report of 1874 Maria said that the "expense of taking a child out of the gutters in London, and placing it in Canada .... may be roughly reckoned at £15 per head". Her main home in England was in Peckham, which was opened on the 13 July 1872. Most girls spent up to a year there before they were sent to Canada via Liverpool and Quebec, from where they would travel by train to the reception home at Niagara, called 'Our Western Home'.

In 1874 the Local Government Board commissioned Andrew Doyle, one of its senior inspectors, to report back on the schemes for emigration of workhouse children to Canada, with particular concern expressed about the schemes operated by Maria Rye and Annie MacPherson. Following his critical report, the Local Government Board stopped the emigration of children from workhouses in March 1875, a decision that forced Maria Rye to suspend sending out more children for two years.

Upon Maria Rye's retirement in 1895 the management of her organisation passed to the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society (see 11 below). Emigration through the scheme ceased in July 1915 when the Home closed. Records of her organisation can be found at Liverpool University
http://www.liv.ac.uk/library/sca/colldescs/mariarye.html.

5 National Children's Homes

The National Children's Homes and Orphanages was founded by the Methodist Reverend Thomas Bowman Stephenson, Francis Horner and Alfred Mager, 1869. The first Children's Home was opened in London but they quickly expanded into other areas of Britain (becoming known as the National Children's Home in 1907). The charity started an emigration scheme sending children to Canada from 1873-1931, to Australia as part of the Fairbridge Farm School (1937-1939) and directly itself from 1950-1954. A total of 3,600 children were sent to Canada, Australia and

New Zealand between 1873-1931 alone. Now renamed Action for Children, they offer a access to records service for former child migrants.

The Maritime Archives & Library holds a small collection of photographs of children, publicity leaflets and historical notes, including an account of the first party of children's voyage on the SS *Polynesian* to Ontario in 1873.

DX/444 c.1900-1980

6 Catholic organisations

Father Nugent of Liverpool, through his Nugent Society Care Homes, was the first of the Catholic organisations to send children to Canada. He made arrangements with local parish priests who were to place the children with local families in Quebec and Ontario. In 1870 a small party of 24 children and Father Nugent set sail for Canada, and Father Nugent became a pioneer in finding new homes, new lives and new opportunities for destitute children. On their arrival he embarked on a nine month lecture tour of Canada and America, pleading the case for "Nobody's Children". His argument was that "poverty is no crime, but a misfortune". If you are trying to trace someone who emigrated to Canada or the USA, you can contact the Archivist at their Head Office (see address list at the end of this information sheet).

The Custody of Children Act (Barnardo's Act) 1891 legalised the work of private emigration societies, and Catholic child migration became focussed through the Archdiocese of Westminster's "Crusade of Rescue" in 1899 and all work was moved to St. George's in Ottawa. By the early 1900s children were being sent to Canada from Father Berry's Homes in Liverpool. St. George's was closed in 1935. Records for the Catholic children in Canada were returned to England and some were subsequently destroyed. Nugent Care has deposited historical records which relate to Liverpool-based institutions formerly run by the Society, including British Home Children, with the Liverpool Record Office http://liverpool.gov.uk/libraries/archives-family-history/.

7 Dr Barnardo's

Founded in London in 1869, Dr Barnardo's sent out children with Annie MacPherson in the 1870s before sending children themselves, with some 30,000 children and young people being sent to Canada between 1882-1939. Around 2,784 children and young people were sent out to Australia from 1921 until the end of child migration in 1967 when Barnardo's sent out its last nine migrants. Barnardo’s Family History Service can help trace information about individual children who migrated to Australia or Canada from their institution.

8 Fegan's Child and Family Care (Fegan's Homes)

James Fegan founded his first home in Deptford in 1872. He sent out around 3,166 boys to his homes in Brandon, Manitoba and Toronto, Canada, between 1884-1938. The British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa has online indexes http://www.bifhsgo.ca/cstm_fegan.php to Fegan Home settlement records. The Fegan Homes based in Kent are still in operation as of March 2014 and hold additional records relating to boys who were brought to Canada (see Useful Addresses)

9 Quarriers Homes

Quarriers Homes (formerly the Orphan Homes of Scotland and Quarriers Homes) sent out their first children to Ontario, Canada with Annie MacPherson on the ship *St David* on 2 July 1872. In 1888 they set up their own receiving home "Fairknowe" at Brockville, Ontario, to receive children from the Quarrier Home in Scotland and from the Douglas Industrial Home, Isle of Man.

10 Middlemore Homes

John T. Middlemore founded the Child's Emigration Homes in Birmingham, and sent out children to Ontario, Canada in 1873, and later from 1893 to Nova Scotia. In all, a total of 5,000 children were sent to Canada and around 259 to Australia (1922-1955) in association with the Fairbridge Farm Schools. The archives of the Middlemore Homes are held by Birmingham Archives and Heritage http://libraryofbirmingham.com/archives at Birmingham Central Library. The British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa (BIFHSGO) have compiled a Middlemore Homes Index http://www.bifhsgo.ca/cpage.php?pt=15 detailing children who were sent to Canada.

11 The Children's Society (formerly the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society)

The Children's Society sent out approximately 3,940 children to Canada, Australia and Southern Rhodesia between 1883 and c1995. It maintained six receiving homes in Canada which received children between 1883-1937, and from 1925-c1955 used other agencies to send children to Australia and Southern Rhodesia. The website Hidden Lives Revealed http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk contains Annual Reports and anonymised case files.

12 The Farming School Movements

In 1903 Mrs Elinor Close established a training farm in Nova Scotia to train workhouse children before their placement with Canadian farmers. In 1912 Thomas Sedgewick sent out his first party of 50 youths (15-19 yrs old) from Liverpool and London to New Zealand. The first farm school of the Child Emigration Society of Oxford was established by Kingsley Fairbridge at Pinjarra near Perth, Australia in 1912. The Fairbridge Society became the leading exponent of the farm school movement, and assisted over 3,362 child migrants to Australia between 1913-c1960. In the 1950s they also introduced a Parent Migration Scheme. A list of records of the Fairbridge Society held at Liverpool University and elsewhere is available http://www.dango.bham.ac.uk/catalogues/C2131.doc

13 The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army founded by William Booth assisted emigrants to Canada in the late 19th century, especially children up until World War One. After the War they sent migrants to Australia, especially farm boys who were trained at its special training camp at Riverview, Brisbane. In the 1920s the Army chartered the *Vedic* to make four voyages with emigrants to Australia.

14 Child Migrant Trust

In 1986 Nottingham social worker Margaret Humphreys set up the Child Migrant Trust to assist former child migrants reunite with their families. In 1998 after several years of campaigning by the Child Migrant Trust, a UK Parliamentary Committee visited Australia to report on the child migration policy and the poor treatment of many of the child migrants, particularly those in the Catholic homes in Western Australia and Queensland. On 13 August 1998 the Western Australian Legislative Assembly apologised to the former child migrants for their poor treatment in the state's institutions.

15 **Boys and Girls Welfare Society (previously Manchester and Salford Boys and Girls Refuges) now Together Trust**

Established in 1870 by Leonard Shaw and Richard B Taylor and took part in the child emigration scheme, primarily to Canada and then through the Child Emigration Society from about 1918. Owned the Marchmont Home in Belleville, Ontario, Canada until 1915 when it was taken over by the Liverpool Sheltering Homes.

Bibliography

BAGNALL, Kenneth. *The Little Immigrants: The Orphans Who Came to Canada*. Toronto:
Macmillan, 1980.

BARKER, Ralph. *Children of the Benares: A War Crime and its Victims*. Trowbridge, Wiltshire: Methuen, 1987.

BEAN, Philip & MELVILLE, Joy. *Lost Children of the Empire*. London: Unwin Hyman,

1989.

BLACKBURN, Geoff. *The Children's Friend Society: Juvenile Emigrants to Western Australia, South Africa and Canada, 1834-1842*. Northbridge: W.A. Access, 1993.

BOWDER, Bill. *Children First: A Photo of England's Children in Need*. London: Mowbray,
1980.

FETHNEY, Michael. *The Absurd and the Brave: CORB the True Account of the British Government's World War II Evacuation of children overseas*. Sussex: Book Guild, 1990.

GILL, Alan. *Orphans of the Shocking Story of Child Emigration to Australia*. Milsons Point,
New South Wales: Vintage, 1998.

HILL, David. *The Forgotten Children: Fairbridge Farm School and its Betrayal of Britain's Migrants to Australia.* Random House Australia, 2008.

HORNE, Alistair. *A Bundle from Britain*. London: Macmillan, 1993.

HUMPHREYS, Margaret. *Empty Cradles*. London: Corgi Books, 1995.

KERSHAW, Roger & SACKS, Janet. *New Lives for Old: The story of Britain's child migrants*. National Archives, 2008.

LANE, John, *Fairbridge Kid*. Pinjarra, Western Australia, 2000.

MAGNUSSON, Anna. *Quarriers Story: One Man's Vision That Gave 7,000 Children a New Life in Canada*. Dundurn Press, 2006.

MELVILLE, Joy. *Lost Children of the Empire*. Harper Collins 1989

PARKER, Roy. *Uprooted: The Shipment of Poor Children to Canada, 1867-1917*. Bristol 2008.

PARR, Joy. *Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924*. London: Croom Helm, 1980.

SHERINGTON, Geoffrey & JEFFERY, Chris. *Fairbridge, Empire and Child Emigration*. London: Woburn Press, 1998.

STOKES, Edward. *Innocents Abroad: The Story of British Child Evacuees in Australia, 1940-1945*. St. Leonards, New South Wales: Allen & Unwin, 1994.

SUTHERLAND, Neil. *Children in English-Canadian Society: framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976.

WAGNER, Gillian. *Children of the Empire*. London: Weidenfield, 1982.

Useful addresses

Child Welfare Archives Department of Special Collections and Archives Sydney Jones Library University of Liverpool PO Box 123 Liverpool L69 3DA Tel: 0151 794 2696 Website: http://www.liv.ac.uk/library/sca/colldescs/social.html	**The National Archives (PRO)** Ruskin Avenue Kew, Richmond Surrey TW9 4DU Tel: 020 8876 3444 Email: enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk Website: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk
Barnardo's Tanner's Lane Barkingside Ilford Essex IG6 1QG Tel: 020 8550 8822 Fax: 020 8498 7017 Email: supportcare@barnardos.org.uk Website: http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_history.htm	**Catholic Children's Society (Westminster)** 73 St. Charles Square London W10 6EJ Tel: 020 8969 5305 Website: www.cathchild.org.uk
Fairbridge (Prince's Trust) Prince's Trust House 9 Eldon Street London EC2M 7LS Tel: 020 7543 1234 Website: www.fairbridge.org.uk	**Action for Children (Previously National Children's Home (NCH))** Access to Records Service 12a Hackford Walk Hackford Road Stockwell London

	SW9 0QT Tel: 01923 361 500 Email: ask.us@actionforchildren.org.uk Website: www.actionforchildren.org.uk
The Salvation Army 101 Newington Causeway London SE1 6BN Tel: 020 7367 4500	**Liverpool Record Office** Archives & Family History Department Central Library William Brown Street Liverpool L3 8EN Tel: 0151 233 3069
Mr. Fegan's Homes Inc. 160 St. James Road Tunbridge Wells Kent TN1 2HE Tel: 01892 538288 Email: info@fegans.org.uk Website: www.fegans.org.uk	**Quarrier Homes** Bridge-of-Weir Renfrewshire PA11 3SX Scotland Tel: 01505 612224 Email: enquiries@quarriers.org.uk Website: www.quarriers.org.uk
Children's Society Archive Block A, Floor 2 Tower Bridge Business Complex 100 Clement Road Bermondsey London SE16 4DG Tel: 020 75252 2966 Email: archives@childrenssociety.org.uk Website: www.childrenssociety.org.uk	**Nugent Care** 99 Edge Lane Liverpool L7 2PE Tel: 0151 261 2000 Email: info@nugentcare.org Website: www.nugentcare.org
The Archivist – Together Trust Schools Hill Cheadle Cheshire SK8 1JE Tel: 0161 283 4848 Website: http://www.togethertrust.org.uk/	

Records relating to child migrants may be held in the archives of the recipient countries:

For America, check the US National Archives and Records Administration at http://www.archives.gov/research/immigration/

For Australia, see the National Archives of Australia at http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs124.aspx

New Zealand archives can be located at http://archives.govt.nz/research/guides/migration

For Canada, see the National Archives of Canada records relating to "Home Children" http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/immigration-records/home-children-1869-1930/Pages/home-children.aspx

The National Archives have digitised their BT 27 record series providing outward passenger lists from 1890 to 1960. These records can be viewed online at www.findmypast.com. Inward passenger lists from 1878 to 1960 are also available at the National Archives and online at www.ancestry.co.uk/search/db.aspx?dbid=1518.